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SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION: CROSS-STRAIT RELATIONS, SINO-JAPANESE DISPUTES

¶1. Summary: The upcoming trips to China by KMT Chairman Lien Chan and PFP Chairman James Soong have received wide coverage in the Taipei dailies April 20, as to be expected after Taiwan's Presidential Office April 19 announcement put the visits in a somewhat different light. The Presidential Office announced Tuesday that no one would disagree with the fact that the 10-point consensus reached by President Chen Shui-bian and PFP Chairman James Soong in late February represents Chen's position. That possibly implies that Soong's visit, at least, is not contrary to President Chen's wishes. The pro-independence "Liberty Times," Taiwan biggest daily, ran a banner headline on its front page that said: "Lien and Soong to visit China, the Green Camp proposes three oppositions and three insistences." The sub-headline added: "DPP Executive Committee passed a resolution and is firmly opposed to using the acceptance of one China and the 1992 consensus as the pre-condition for [Taiwan] political party leaders' visits to China. [The DPP] will use the resolution [as a criteria] to examine Lien and Soong." The "Liberty Times" also carried a news story on page two which said "In the face of Lien's and Soong's China's trips, the United States is concerned that the arms procurement may not be passed easily." The sub-headline read: "High-ranking sources said the United States believes Beijing should contact Taiwan's ruling government and [the United States] also says frankly that it hopes Taiwan will not further delay the U.S. arms procurements by switching the focus." The centrist "China Times," however, carried a story on page four that quoted the PFP as saying that should a consensus be reached by Soong and Chinese President Hu Jintao, it might become the basis for both sides of the Taiwan Strait to resume dialogue.

¶2. The "Liberty Times" ran an editorial strongly criticizing the planned visits to China by Taiwan's opposition party leaders. It urged the Taiwan government not to treat Lien's and Soong's visits differently, or it will fall into a trap set by China. A limited-circulation, pro-independence English-language "Taipei Times" editorial called on the leaders of the three main parties to hold a summit on national affairs and to pass the U.S. arms procurement bill before Lien and Soong visit China. A "China Times" news analysis said that Beijing's plan is to have Lien and Soong build a bridge first so as to encourage President Chen Shui-bian to "take a new route." The limited-circulation, pro-unification English-language "China Post" editorial said Lien's and Soong's upcoming visits to China reflect a "sea change" in Taiwan's domestic politics and may pave the way for Taiwan and Beijing to bury the hatchet and move toward political reconciliation.

¶3. The major Chinese-language Taiwan newspapers' coverage of the anti-Japanese disputes has decreased further, and only one limited-circulation English-language newspaper editorialized on this issue. The pro-independence English-language "Taiwan News" said the anti-Japanese riots in China confirm the validity of Taiwan's fears of the dangers from extreme "great Chinese" nationalism. End summary.

¶1. Cross-Strait Relations

A) "[We] Will Not Allow [Lien and Soong] to Offer the Safety and Well-being of the 23 Million [Taiwan] People as Tribute to Curry Favor with China"

The pro-independence "Liberty Times" [circulation: 800,000] editorialized (4/20):

". In other words, in terms of national sovereignty, China is Taiwan's only enemy; as for the aspect of economic development, China is Taiwan's biggest competitor. In the face of such an enemy and a rival

that tries to get all it wants by fair means or foul, Taiwan's cross-Straits policy must focus on self-protection; namely, it must make sure that the foundation of Taiwan's economic development will not be undermined, its freedom and democracy will not be sabotaged, and that its national sovereignty will not be trampled. Based on such a pre-condition, Taiwan obviously should maintain a certain distance with China so as to ensure its safety. The visits to China by Taiwan's opposition party leaders, with or without the government's authorization or the ten-point consensus reached between Chen and Soong, are inappropriate behaviors. In particular, China is getting more and more skillful in applying the united front tactics on Taiwan. It could appeal to the Anti-Secession Law on one hand and befriend Lien and Soong on the other so as to be ready to launch an attack against the Taiwan government simultaneously from within and without. The government will fall into the trap set by China if it decides to adopt a differentiate treatment toward Lien and Soong. ."

B) "Expediency Only Goes so Far"

The pro-independence, English-language "Taipei Times" [circulation: 30,000] commented in its editorial (4/20):

". Before Lien and Soong visit Beijing, it is crucial that the leaders of the three main parties hold a summit on national affairs. Only if some level of consensus is reached will the KMT and PFP chairmen be able to engage in substantive negotiations with Beijing. .

"To ensure that the Taiwanese people emerge as victors from these talks, the two party chairmen should demand legislators push through the long-delayed arms-procurement bill before arriving in China. We all know that peace is built on security, so Taiwan should first secure its position before entering into talks with China. Only then will the talks hold any meaning."

C) "Beijing's Plan Is That Lien and Soong Will Build a Bridge [across the Taiwan Strait] for Bian to 'Take a New Route'"

Journalist Wang Li-chuan commented in a news analysis of the conservative, pro-unification "United Daily News" [circulation: 600,000] (4/20):

"Beijing has been very proactively in inviting the chairmen of Taiwan's two major political parties to visit mainland China lately in an attempt to open a new channel and platform for cross-Straits dialogue and communication. The cross-Straits situation is now at a state of 'Where the hills and streams end and there seems no road beyond, amidst shading willows and blooming flowers another village appears' - meaning one begins to see hope when all seems lost. Beijing's invitations revealed many of its intentions: in addition to show the United States its attitude to build the channel of dialogue across the Taiwan Strait proactively, China also wants to place pressure on the Chen Shui-bian government using the power of Taiwan's opposition parties so as to force him to accept the '1992 Consensus' and to push the cross-Straits ties back to the 'one China' framework.

"Judged either from the domestic or international perspective, the Chen Shui-bian administration and his party will suffer a great pressure following [KMT Chairman] Lien Chan's and [PFP] Chairman James Soong's visits to China. In terms of the international climate, a stabilized cross-Straits situation is in the interests of all countries involved at the current stage. Beijing has more than once told Washington that it 'will adopt measures to reduce cross-Straits tensions,' and its invitations will give U.S. Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice, who is always relentless about the Beijing regime, no reasons to find fault with it. Beijing's invitations to the leaders of Taiwan's two major opposition parties are all the more a gesture to show to the international community that even though Beijing has passed the Anti-Secession Law, its position is to advocate cross-Straits peace and stability. .

"Lien and Soong will soon visit mainland China separately, and a new aspect for the cross-Straits relations will be unveiled. The Beijing authorities have more than once sent out signals of 'reconciliation' to the Chen Shui-bian administration and his party; its purpose of hoping that the DPP will 'take a new route' is more than evident."

D) "PRC Visits by Lien and Soong Reflect Political Sea

Change"

The conservative, pro-unification, English-language "China Post" [circulation: 30,000] noted in an editorial (4/20):

"The scheduled historic visits to Beijing in the next few weeks by KMT chairman Lien Chan and PFP leaders James Soong reflect a sea change in Taiwan's domestic politics and may pave the way for this island and its arch-rival mainland China to bury the hatchet and move toward political reconciliation. .

"When examined deeply, however, Lien and Soong's coming mainland trips mark a shift in a popular mood to improve relations with China. It is this nascent opinion shift that has emboldened the KMT and PFP leaders to embrace Beijing without having to worry that their new policy will cause their parties to lose voter support, as they have been in the past.

"Meanwhile, Lien and Soong's bold initiatives to visit Beijing reflect a corresponding decline in Chen's political influence and his usually powerful populism. He can no longer continue to deny an opposition role in the debate on cross-strait policy by painting their politicians red by accusing them of selling out Taiwan or being the communists' fellow travelers.

"The current surge in the embrace of China among the opposition leaders, in fact, is only part of a recent series of developments that underscore a dwindling in the influence of the independence movement as a whole, and this dwindling was brought about by three major factors.

"First and more important is the DPP's humiliating setbacks in the December election. The inability of Chen, who campaigned for a new Constitution and a plan to change China-linked names of all government institutions, to win a legislative majority has made it impossible for him to carry out those plans. More fundamentally, the poll setbacks have weakened his legitimacy to push for his political agenda.

"Another factor was a change in U.S. policy. For the past year or so, Washington has reinforced its stance of not supporting Taiwan independence by consistently warning Chen not to take any moves to unilaterally alter the cross-strait status quo. Otherwise, he could risk losing U.S. backing.

"A third reason is the impact of Beijing's recently enacted anti-secession law, which authorizes the mainland to attack Taiwan if it moves toward formal independence. The threat of attack has produced a constraining impact on Chen and his administration. ."

12. Sino-Japanese Disputes

"Anti-Japanese Riots in China Confirm Taiwan's Worries"

The pro-independence "Taiwan News" [circulation: 20,000] commented in its editorial (4/20):

". As a victim of 50 years of Japanese colonial occupation from 1895 to 1945, Taiwan and its people, including many whom directly experienced Japanese aggression in China as well, has ample reasons to resent Japanese rule and no reason to defend Japan's record in the Second World War, but so far have remained relatively quiet in the current wave of anti-Japanese protests.

"The prime reason lies in the fact that the Taiwan government and most of our people are rather concerned about the present and possible future impact of the surfacing of a virulent form of great Chinese chauvinism than about the undeniable reality of Japanese crimes of aggression committed nearly 70 years ago. .

"Given its status as one of the world's greatest economic powers and its postwar diplomatic record (including its active role in humanitarian aid programs), Japan fully deserves a seat on the U.N. Security Council even though chauvinist political forces still exist and have some influence, as the approval of the offending textbooks unfortunately shows. .

"Moreover, the tacit approval of the PRC authorities to the overt displays of racism and chauvinism against Japanese citizens has starkly underlined the validity of Taiwan's own concerns of possible aggression by the PRC and the all too real possibility that the Beijing

authorities could stir up similar waves of `popular anger' against Taiwan and Taiwan citizens or against the people of any country that supports Taiwan someday in the future.

"We hope in particular that global policy-makers will take seriously this threat. In particular, we urge the European Union to continue to maintain the EU's embargo on the sale of arms to the PRC, imposed in the wake of the Tiananmen Incident."

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